

DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

Goodbye Charlie - Lyceum 12/16. 1 pro- Journal American- and 6 con-filed on new George Axelrod comedy with Lauren Bacall, Sydney Chaplin, Sarah Marshall, staged by author, produced by Leland Hayward. Most praised comedy skills of players and Axelrod as director, but felt play except for a funny first scene never became more than an expanded vaude sketch. Sole affirmative voter McClain, Journal American, also thought play itself was mostly an expanded blackout, but he thoroughly enjoyed enchanting and skilled portrayal by Bacall, the fine dramatic talents of Chaplin and the very funny Marshall. Con side headed by Atkinson, Times, who feared the comedy idea presented had no future after a good start, inspite of good slam-bang performance by Bacall and a gem of acting by Marshall. Kerr, Herald Tribune, disagreed with colleagues on Bacall's performance, feeling that she was unconvincing in the strange role, a comment meant to be a compliment to her. He also doubted if the foundation of the fantasy was very funny to begin with. Chapman, News, did think author had a capital funny idea that developed into a longish evening, Axelrod seems too polite about sex for his own good. Coleman, Mirror, found the play more burlesquesque than Thorne Smithist, a not very tasteful one joke play, though critic reported opening night audience blistered palms applauding. Watts, Post, also felt play inspite of valuable assistance from cast and a hopeful start could not overcome the handicap of a one joke play whose humor dwindles into monotony and dullness. Aston, World Telegram & Sun, thought material got thin in comedy with adroit, delightful players.

Actors Fund Luncheon

Theatre profession was asked by NYC Police Commissioner Stephen P Kennedy to assist in coping with the city's problem of juvenile delinquency by volunteering services to stage programs that would enable youngsters to express themselves and to work out some of their problems through acting. Kennedy spoke at ninth annual Actors Fund Luncheon which launched annual Bread Basket fund raising campaign, this year from Dec 25-Jan 2. He and Ralph Bellamy, president of Actors Equity, were given Fund Gold Medals, Kennedy for his cooperation with Fund and its many activities and Bellamy for his distinguished performances throughout the years as well as his untiring efforts to improve the welfare of all performers.

Suggested theatrical performances and programs could supplement the Police Athletic League's present recreational activities designed to thwart public crime, Kennedy said. Theatre is the best method by which youngsters can acquire social poise, and it is also the best type of therapy.

Interview Hi-Lites

SADA THOMPSON, U.S.A., is one of the majority of first-rate actors who make up the backbone of the Off-Broadway casts, but seldom cross the bridge to midtown, comments Herridge, Post. For the past seven years she has been outstanding in a dozen downtown production starting with *The Clandestine Marriage* at the Cherry Lane. Her sole fling at Broadway was in the quick flop *Juno*.

JACKIE GLEASON, *Take Me Along*, has a low opinion of critics who should see the shows out of town and then turn in a constructive critique to help the producer make the show better, he told Slocum, Mirror. If Broadway reviewers are so dedicated they would practice this. Then if the producer ignored their advice, they would have every right to murder the show.

IVY LARRIC, Theatre party agent, believes most party agents are women because men have found the pace too grueling for them, she told Calta, Times. Servicing 1500 organizations per year, the gross for this season now at its midway point is over \$7 million. Agent's commission is 6.8%. Theatre parties rather than being hurtful, provide theatre with a condition of stability, protecting producers as well as other theatre craftsmen from the dreaded quick flop.

THEATRE



BOOK

COMMENTS

"Lyrics on Several Occasions" by Ira Gershwin (Knopf \$5) is a most enjoyable and valuable book, okays Nichols, Times, because of the lyric writer's running commentary, digressions, asides and anecdotes.

"Dear Audience" by Blanche Yurka (Prentice-Hall \$3) is the spirited report of an experienced player on many aspects of stage, screen and TV, recommends Rodo, Variety. Tome is lively, diverting and of more than transient value.



THEATRE

RECORD

COMMENTS

"...And then I wrote the Music Man" with Rini and Meredith Willson (Capitol) enjoyed by Schreiber, World Telegram & Sun, and Helm, Variety. Audition for angel by composer and his wife is a real collector's item and it has a simple charm and a fresh wit, notes former. Latter especially liked the salesmanship in Willson's singing of his own lyrics.

Fiorello! original cast disc (Capitol) added two more pro notes from Watt, News, and Gros, Variety. Though music is of a lesser order, the songs are tuneful and admirably pointed in their references to the times under discussion, notes News reviewer. While trade mugg found record makes up in zest and originality what it lacks in name attractions. Score is bouncy and witty and Howard Da Silva runs away with honors with his renditions of "Politics and Poker" and "Little Tin Box."

"Moss Hart" disc (Spoken Word) contains readings by the author of his *Lady in the Dark* scenes and *The Man Who Came to Dinner* scenes, plus two passages from his "Act One". Record is fun to listen to, approves Lask, Times

LONDON



STAGE

VIEWS

Curiosity in itself is apparently not strong enough to get admirers to the theatre to see their idols in plays which fail to capture the public fancy, comments "Stage" editorial on the London failures of *Woman on the Stairs* with TV star Gwen Watford and *The Love Doctor* with film star Ian Carmichael.

Both stars are far bigger names now in England than when they worked exclusively in the theatre, but are the new laurels, which they have deservedly earned, of any use as a box-office asset, asks British trade paper. Evidently the TV and film fans did not support the stars onstage, for each play closed after two weeks.

Pantomime is the outstanding exception, editorial concludes. Managements pay fantastic salaries to get TV stars into them because their presence in the cast is enough in itself to pack the theatre twice a day for months. People go out of curiosity to see faces which have long been familiar on their TV screens. Though many who go to pantomime are often simply once-a-year theatre patrons.

Artists who want playgoers at their feet cannot hope for success without the aid of good material to show their talents to advantage, "Stage" warned. TV awards and film fanfares belong to different worlds and carry no weight on the boards.



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT



PROS & CONS BY TMK

ATKINSON PROS... A mass movement of citizenry to insist that Brooks Atkinson withdraw his resignation as NY Times drama critic suggested by Watts, Post. Just the presence of a man of his quality gives the theatre added importance, Post reviewer concluded... Winchell, Mirror, added that he will miss Atkinson's reviews, for he gives first nighters class... Sobol, Journal American, reported that Times top brass loves and respects Atkinson and it isn't too happy about his move.

COLUMN TIPS... Little Mary Sunshine may spend summer at Central City, Colo. hears Walker, News... Many law-suits and counter suits filed over closing out of town of Midnight Sun, notes Winchell, Mirror... Lunt and Fontanne TV special a possibility for late spring, whispers Baer, Journal American... "Ministaffia" red blotting paper eaten nightly by cast in The Fighting Cock is a specially baked communion wafer, reports Lyons, Post.

BATTLE ROYAL... The Miracle Worker battle onstage each night between Anne Bancroft and Patty Duke is composed of five single-spaced typewritten pages, took five days to write and two days to stage, Robertson, Times, discovered. Injuries so far include a bruised bone by Bancroft and a chipped tooth by Duke... Herald Tribune story adds that one chair per night gives way during the fight, and that the stage manager now buys them by the dozen.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Saratoga was rated as a pleasant evening of theatre by Eleanor Roosevelt, Post. Though there are moments when in the songs you feel a little reminiscent twinge of something you have heard before, but the acting is good, Mrs FDR commented... Julie Bovasso, Dinny and the Witches, marked by author William Gibson as the best actress he has encountered since Anne Bancroft, he told Zolotow, Times... Watts, Post, thought Harry Golden in his "Carolina Israelite" was extremely generous and gracious to the NY reviewers on the Only in America notices.

UNIONS vs PRODUCERS... If the theatre craft unions continue to treat the producers like the steel industry, soon there will be no theatre, Robert Joseph, producer of Heartbreak House told Little, Herald Tribune. The unions should have the same responsibility toward the general health of the theatre as the producers. The members of the crafts are not machinists' helpers', they are artists in a field that needs them.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... A Times reader who liked Silent Night, Lonely Night would rather see that play again than some of the psychopathic, degenerate drivel that currently has become hits... CD Correction: Atkinson, Times, was the Moscow newsman for Times in 1945-46 and returned to his NY drama post in 1946.

SECOND GUESSES... The Fighting Cock is emphatically worth seeing, Anouilh even at his second best is a treat to listen to, far more interesting and enlivening in the flashing play of his brilliant, urbane and graceful mind that most dramatists at the summit of their skill, explains Watts, Post. Critic is forced to admit that in rating his original first night review he could understand why two papers differed on his views. He wasn't trying to be evasive, but all plays are not clear cut cases of good or bad... Saratoga which is still being worked on could be improved to its advantage if its plot were told quickly and directly, suggests Chapman, News, to Arthur Laurents who is reportedly aiding Morton Da Costa in rewrite chores.

Goodbye Charlie is pleasant entertainment thanks to the charming talents of its three leading players and its director who kept what might have been an obnoxious bore at a high interest level. Axelrod, the author, writes very funny one line gags and little plot. Axelrod, the director, is ingenious in brilliantly staging what little action he provides via the script. The players cooperate and always remain in good taste. This comedy, which is sure to be done badly in almost every summer stock in the country, holds your interest to the very end, if only to see how the author is going to get his characters out of the hopeless situation.

*

Harry Belafonte at the Palace presents an interesting, though slightly over-produced one man song recital that would be more at home in a nightclub than on a theatre stage. The technique, vocal ability, personal appearance of the entertainer can hardly be questioned for by any record sales chart they are first in the field. But certain aspects of the production from a theatre standpoint left much to be desired. Though he seems to enunciate clearly certain twists of the head away from the ever present microphone make many words hard to understand. The microphone itself must be tuned to the advantage of the balcony patrons, for it almost literally blows the first few rows of the orchestra out of their seats. In the softer numbers Belafonte is charming, in the louder ones he is near impossible. Unlike other Palace entertainers who filled the first half of the evening with top vaude acts, he feels he is enough to carry the full program.

*

ASSORTED NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS BY A SECOND NIGHTER:

Free watch service as a stipulation in Equity contracts with stage managers so the 8:40 PM advertised curtain goes up by at least 8:45.

Strong ushers to enforce producers rulings not to allow late-comers to be seated during ANY scene, not just the first.

Patience and forbearance by those who insist on dashing up the aisle at the first hint of a curtain line. Let them wait until the author's end of the play is reached, or kick them in the shins on the way out.

Closed exit doors that will not be banged by traveling stagehands, stage managers, etc in their trip from backstage to the box-office during the performance.

Checkroom locations upstairs so their customers will not have to leave 15 minutes before the end.

Identification in the lobby of the name of the theatre party organization attending the performance, both for information and revenge.

Deaf and dumb ushers who could not put you in the wrong seat to begin with, and then couldn't talk during the entire performance.

Adding machines for orange juice stand attendants so they wouldn't have to count the quarters during the performance.

A big stick at the end of each aisle to effectively silence the big talkers.

A determined search by the interviewers to find at least one actor per season who is in a bad play and admits that the reviewers might have been right.

Dec 28, 1959 THEATRE FACT CHART--CRITICAL DIGEST--139 E 47, NYC EL 5-6894

This weekly chart of CRITICAL DIGEST presents up-to-date data on current business and critical reaction to current Broadway and Off Broadway shows. Top week-end box office prices and opening dates are listed.

SUBSCRIBERS ONLY may phone, write or call in person for any other specific critical data and/or for specific details of LATE NYC THEATRE REVIEWS and OUT OF TOWN TRYOUT reviews.

"C"--Critical--figures refer to percentage of PRO votes filed by 7 NYC daily reviewers--Times (Atkinson, Calta, Galb, Funke), Herald Tribune (Kerr, Crist, Gleason), News-Chapman, McHarry) - Colemen (Mirror) Post (Watts, Herridge), Journal American-McClain, O'Connor, World Telegram & Sun (Aston, Krieger). PRO means show was recommended for entertaining and/or stimulating evening, not if critic predicted if show would be a commercial hit (earn back its investment) or not.

"B"--Business--figures refer to percentage of gross ticket sales last week and indicates current availability of tickets. Figures that follow are corrected gross estimates by Variety for past week's business, all figures in thousands of dollars. Thus 100% B- Cap \$68--\$68 \$64--means that the past week the show was a sell-out at capacity of \$68,000, the previous week business was \$64,000, etc.

AT DROP OF HAT	250 W 45 Golden \$6.90 10/8/59	90% C- 1 Con- Times Lay off 12/21-12/26 50% B- Cap \$30--\$16 \$20 \$20 \$22 \$23
DESTRY RIDES AGAIN	255 W 45 Imperial \$9.40 4/23/59	90% C- 2 Con-Times, H Trib 3 raves 65% B- Cap \$64--\$40 \$48 \$49 \$47 \$51
FIGHTING COCK	245 W 52 ANTA \$7.50 12/8/59	40% C- 3 Pro- Times, Mirror, Post Cap \$50
FIOR ELLOI	235 W 44 Broadhurst \$9.40 11/23/59	100% C- 5 raves- Post, WTS mild book 100% B- Cap \$58--\$58 \$58 \$54
FIVE FINGER EXERCISE	245 W 45 Music Box \$7.50 12/2/59	90% C- 1 Con- News 5 raves 75% B- Cap \$40--\$30
FLOWER DRUM SONG	246 W 44 St James \$8.05 12/1/58	90% C- 1 Con- Post 95% B- Cap \$64--\$60 \$61 \$61 \$61 \$63 \$63
GANGS ALL HERE	209 W 49 Ambassador \$7.50 10/1/59	60% C- 4 Pro- Times, H Trib, Post, WTS 70% B- Cap \$41--\$28 \$31 \$30 \$35 \$35
GOODBYE CHARLIE	149 E 45 Lyceum \$6.90 12/16/59	10% C- 1 Pro- J Am (For cast only)
GYPSY	1681 Bway Broadway \$9.40 5/21/59	100% C- 7 Pro- J Am milder on book 100% B- Cap \$81--\$81 \$81 \$72 \$82 \$81
HEARTBREAK HOUSE	226 W 41 Rose \$7.50 10/10/59	100% C- 7 pro- some milder on play 65% B- Cap \$45--\$26 \$33 \$34 \$31 \$36
LA PLUME	242 W 45 Royale \$8.05 11/11/58	100% C- 6 raves- Times milder 100% B- Cap \$45-- \$45 \$45 \$45 \$45
LOSS OF ROSES	230 W 49 Coronet \$6.90 11/28/59	10% C- 1 Pro- News- Closed 12/19 45% B- Cap \$44--\$22, \$19
MAJORITY OF ONE	243 W 47 Barrymore \$6.90 2/16/59	90% C- 1 Con- News- all raves co-stars 65% B- Cap \$53--\$31 \$35 \$38 \$37 \$39
MARRIAGE GO ROUND	236 W 45 Plymouth \$6.90 12/29/58	40% C- 3 Pro- Times, News, WTS 85% B- Cap \$43--\$39 \$42 \$39 \$39 \$43 \$43
MIRACLE WORKER	137 W 48 Playhouse \$7.50 10/19/59	100% C- 5 raves- Times, WTS milder 100% B- Cap \$36--\$35 \$35 \$35 \$36 \$36 \$36
MUSIC MAN	245 W 44 Majestic \$8.05 12/19/57	100% C- 6 raves H Trib milder 85% B- Cap \$70--\$60 \$65 \$60 \$64 \$68 \$69
MY FAIR LADY	235 W 51 Hellinger \$8.05 3/15/56	100% C- 7 raves play-N. w/ OK P Charls 85% B- Cap \$70--\$60 \$63 \$61 \$66 \$64 \$70
ONCE UPON A MATTRESS	250 W 52 Alvin \$6.90 5/11/59	90% C- 1 Con- News 50% B- Cap \$52--\$24 \$26 \$33 Moved Phon
RAISIN IN SUN	III W 44 Belasco \$3.90 3/11/59	100% C- most raves, slight reservations 50% B- Cap \$41--\$22 \$25 \$28 \$29 \$29 \$29
REDHEAD	226 W 46 46th St \$9.20 2/5/59	90% C- 1 Con- Times- 6 raves G Verdon 65% B- Cap \$63--\$38 \$47 \$40 \$48 \$50 \$53
SARATOGA	1634 Bway W. Garden \$9.20 12/7/59	30% C- 2 Pro- News, J Am 85% B- Cap \$72--\$61
SILENT NIGHT, LONELY N.	235 W 45 Morosco \$7.50 12/3/59	0% C- 7 con on play 95% B- Cap \$40--\$36
SOUND OF MUSIC	205 W 45 Lunt \$9.90 11/16/59	90% C- 1 Con- H Trib- 3 raves 100% B- Cap \$75--\$75 \$75 \$75 \$75 \$75
SWEET BIRD YOUTH	302 W 45 Beck \$6.90 3/10/59	100% C- 7 pro- 6 raves Post milder 70% B- Cap \$48--\$33 \$32 \$34 \$33 \$37 \$36
TAKE ME ALONG	225 W 44 Shubert \$9.40 10/22/59	90% C- 1 Con- Mirror- 2 raves- News, WTS 100% B- Cap \$64--\$64 \$65 \$65 \$64 \$64
TENTH MAN	222 W 45 Booth \$7.50 11/5/59	100% C- 7 pro- 2 raves- Times, News 100% B- Cap \$32--\$32 \$32 \$32 \$32 \$32
WARM PENINSULA	206 W 46 Hayes \$6.90 10/20/59	10% C- 1 pro- 6 cons-closes 1/2 40% B- Cap \$40--\$14 \$19 \$21 \$25 \$28 \$27
WORLD S WONG	152 W 54 54th St \$6.90 10/14/58	60% C- 4 Pro- Mir, J Am, WTS, Post 40% B- Cap \$47--\$18 \$21 \$22 \$21 \$25

OFF BROADWAY

BIG KNIFE	120 Mad. MU 6-4950	4 Pro- H Trib, J Am, WTS, Post 2 Con- Times, News
DEVILS GAME	197 E Bway GR 5-6200	4 Pro- Times, Post, WTS, News Yiddish Drama- Week Ends Only
DINNY & WITCHES	38 Comm. CH 2-4491	3 Pro- News, WTS, J Am 4 Con- Times, Trib, Mir, Post
EGOTIST	350 W 57 Blackfriars \$3 10/13/59	2 Con- Times, J Am
ENEMY OF PEOPLE	100-7th Av S OR 3-1036	4 Pro- Times, H Trib, WTS, Post 3 Con- News, Mirror, J Am
KATAKI	133-2nd Av St Marks \$3.60 12/15/59	1 Pro- Post 4 Con- Times, H Trib, J Am, WTS
KOSHER WIDOW	66-2nd Av Anderson \$4.60 10/31/59	6 Pro- No H Trib Review Yiddish musical with Molly Picon
LEAVE IT TO JANE	99-7th Av S Sher Sq \$5 2/5/59	5 Pro- 2 Con- H Trib, News
LITTLE MARY SUNSHINE	126-2nd Av Orpheum \$4.95 11/11/59	6 Pro- 4 Raves- No Mirror review
1001 NIGHTS	175 E. Bway Folksbien \$3 12/15/59	4 Pro- Times, News, WTS, Post Yiddish drama- Week Ends Only
ORPHEUS DESCENDING	138 E 27 Gram Arts \$3.90 10/5/59	4 Pro- Times, WTS, Post, J Am 2 Con- H Trib, News
OUR TOWN	120 Mad. Circle \$4.50 3/23/59	5 Pro- Unanimous approval revival Wilder prize play
SHADOW & SUBSTANCE	120 Mad. Tara \$3.45 11/5/59	5 Pro- Times, H Trib, Post, JAM WTS 1 Con- News
SUMMER 17th DOLL	85 E 4 Downtown \$4.50 10/13/59	4 Pro- H Trib, J Am, WTS, Post 1 Con- Times
3 PENNY OPERA	121 Chris. De Lys \$4.85 9/20/55	3 Pro- Times, H Trib, Post
3 SISTERS	83 E 4 4th St \$4.60 9/21/59	3 Pro- Times, Post, WTS 3 Con- H Trib, News, J Am
TIME OF VENGEANCE	64 & 1st York \$4.60 12/10/59	2 Pro- Times, WTS 5 Con-
USA	32 & Bway Martigne \$4.20 10/28/59	5 Pro- 2 Con- Times, H Trib
LIVING THEATRE	550-6th Av Living \$3.45	Tonite-4 Pro-1 Con- J Am 11/6/59 Connection-5 Con- 1 Pro-Post 7/15
SULLIVAN REPERTORY	181 Sullivan Sullivan St \$3.60	Waltz-3 Pro-Trib, J Am, Post 4/6/59 Borkman-1 Pro- WTS-1 Con-Times 11/25

THEATRE CALENDAR

Etienne Decroux Mime-Cricket 12/23
Pictures in the Hallway-Phoenix 12/26
Tempest- East 74- 12/27
Marching Song- Gate 12/28
Andersonville Trial-Miller 12/29
Alley of Sunset- Jan Hus- 12/30
Mighty Man is He- Cort- 1/6
Juniper and Pagans- Longacre 1/7
Sapho- Renata- 1/11
Peer Gynt- Phoenix 1/12
A Distinct Bell- 1/13
Follies of 1910- Carn Play 1/14
Beckett & Ionesco- Provoc 1/14
Parade- Players 1/19
Motel- Hayes 1/21
Breaking Wall- St Marks 1/26
Russell Patterson Sketch Book-Maidman 1/25
Bible Salesman- Bway Chapel- 1/31
Dr Knock- Green Mews 1/?

And Thoughts of Youth-Provinc 2/2
Deadly Game- Hudson 2/3
Sweet Love Remember'd-Rose 2/4
Cut of the Ax- 2/8

Courtyard-Off 2/15
The Cool World-O'Neill 2/16
Caligula- 54th St- 2/16
The Long Dream- 2/18
The Good Soup- 2/18
Come Share My House-Actor Play 2/18
Piccolo Theatre di Milano-C Center 2/23
The Tumbler- Hayes 2/24
Joshua Tree- 2/24
Toys in the Attic-Hudson 2/25
The Choice- 2/25
There Was Little Girl-Cort 2/26
Beg, Borrow or Steal-54th St 2/?

Winterset- Phoenix 3/1
Greenwillow- Alvin 3/3
The Visit- City Center 3/9
Captains and Kings- 3/9
Paris Not So Gay 3/10
Time Has Come- 3/16
Henry IV-Part 1- Phoenix 4/12
Bye Bye Birdie- 4/14

Twelfth Night-Stratford, Conn 6/8
Hit the Deck-Jones Beach- 6/23

TV THEATRE PROGRAMS

Jan 5- NBC- The Man- on Startime with Audie Murphy
Jan 8- NBC- Man in Dog Suit with Art Carney

This weekly NYC THEATRE NEWSLETTER DIGEST SERVICE--now in its 10th year of service to theatre professionals--producers--directors--teachers--editors--investors--theatre benefit chairmen--college drama departments and college libraries, community theatres, etc--presents each week of the year a concise 15 minute summary of all theatre news, comments, reviews, etc published in the past week's 2100 pages of 7 NYC daily newspapers. Plus free research on specific critical data and details of Late NYC reviews and out of town tryout reviews via mailphone or in person. Back volumes available from 1956.
\$25 per year

Check attached...Bill Co-School....Name.....Address.....



CD

S

9
/25

8
/23

5